

TERROR



NO. 40
MARCH



TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT



10¢

®

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



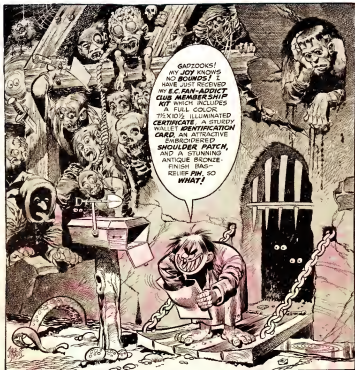
THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



HECKER
DRAWS



GADZOOKS!
MY JOY KNOWS
NO BOUNDS! I
HAVE JUST RECEIVED
MY **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB** MEMBERSHIP
KIT WHICH INCLUDES
A FULL COLOR
7½ X 10½ ILLUMINATED
CERTIFICATE, A STURDY
WALLET IDENTIFICATION
CARD, AN ATTRACTIVE
EMBROIDERED
SHOULDER PATCH,
AND A STUNNING
ANTIQUE BRONZE-
FINISH BAS-
RELIEF PIN. SO
WHAT!

SO WHAT? SO YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!**

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, FILL OUT THE
COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢.
IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS
AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH
MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS, ALONG WITH
25¢ FOR EACH NAME, AND INDICATE THE NAME
OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE
WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER
NUMBER. EVERY MEMBER, CHAPTER OR
INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY...
BY RETURN MAIL.

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAVETTE STREET
NEW YORK 12, N.Y.

SO, ALL RIGHT! SO HERE'S MY TWO
BITS. SO MAKE ME A MEMBER, ALREADY,
AND SEND ME THE THINGS AND STUFF LIKE
WHAT THE KID UP THERE GOT... SO!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ ZONE NO. _____
STATE _____

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELL, NIGHT I SEE YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR HORROR AGAIN. WELL, REST ASSURED... YOUR APPETITE WILL BE SATISFIED. IN FACT, WHEN YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THIS PUTRID PERIODICAL, YOU WILL HAVE LOST YOUR APPETITE ENTIRELY. SO DON'T JUST STAND THERE GROOGLING. COME IN! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, YOUR NAUSEATING NARRATOR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO CRAWL YOUR SPINE AND CIRCLE YOUR BLOOD WITH THE SPINE-TINGLING TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



THE EVENING PERFORMANCE IS OVER AND THE CIRCUS GROUNDS ARE SILENT SAVE FOR THE FLAPPING OF CANVASES AND THE OCCASIONAL SCREECH OF A GAZED ANIMAL. OVERHEAD, A COLD MOON ILLUMINATES THE MIDWINTER LANDSCAPE. SUDDENLY, A SHADY FIGURE EMERGES FROM ONE OF THE DARKENED TENTS AND GLIDES QUIETLY ACROSS THE MOWS, WHISPERING...

STICH

HERE, MARTA...



THE WOMAN PEERS INTO THE SHADOWS, STRAINING TO SEE, HER HEART RACING. THE MAN STEPS INTO THE DIM COLD LIGHT, HIS ARMS EXTENDED.

OH, ERIC, DARLING.

MY DEAREST...



THEY EMBRACE... NEARLY... PASSIONATELY. HUNGRY LIPS... HOLDING CLOSE...

WHAT ABOUT CARL?

HE IS ASLEEP. HE DREAMS OF PARIS AND THE WOMAN HE HAS KNOWN...



THE MAN LOOKS INTO THE WOMAN'S EYES, GRAY-GREEN IN THE MOONLIGHT.

BUT YOU SAID YOU CAN ONLY READ THE THOUGHTS IN HIS MIND HE WANTS YOU TO READ!

HE FADING? NO, ERIC, HE HAS ALWAYS TALKED ME WITH THE POWER HE HAS OVER ME!



THE MAN SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY, STROKING THE WOMAN'S SOFT FLOWING HAIR...

WHY DID YOU EVER MARRY HIM, MARTA?

IT WAS A MISTAKE, ERIC. I MISTOOK THIS FEAR OF NATURE... THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME OCCURRENCE... THIS ABILITY OF CARL'S TO PROJECT THOUGHTS AND MINE TO READ THEM... FOR LOVE!



WE DISCOVERED THIS ABILITY QUITE BY ACCIDENT MANY YEARS AGO. CARL IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED ITS GREAT VALUE. BEFORE I KNEW IT, WE'D TEAMED UP AS A MIND-READING ACT, JOINED THIS TRAVELING CIRCUS, AND WERE MARRIED...

AND YOU'VE BEEN UNHAPPY EVER SINCE.



MISERABLE! I KNOW NOW THAT CARL NEVER LOVED ME. I WAS HIS SUBJECT... HIS THOUGHT-PROJECTION RECEIVER... A MERE OF APPARATUS... NOTHING MORE. BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT REAL LOVE IS... NOW THAT I'VE MET YOU.

HE WOULD NEVER LET YOU GO, WOULD HE?



NEVER! IF I DO, HIS ACT WOULD BE OVER. HE'D NEVER GIVE ME A DIVORCE. THERE'S NO USE MY ASKING!

THEN WE WILL, FOR ARA... JOIN ANOTHER CIRCUS. I HAVE HAD MANY OFFERS. AN ANIMAL TRAINER IS IN GREAT DEMAND.



THE WIND RIPS ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS... WHISPERS AROUND THE TENT ROPE, SASSY AGAINST THE CANVAS... CARRYING THE SIGNS, THE WHISPERS, THE SASS OF THE LOVERS IN THE SHADOWS, AND IN HIS TENT, CARL STIRS UNEASILY... OPENS HIS EYES...

MARTA...
MARTA? MARTA?

HER BED? IT IS EMPTY!
WHERE COULD SHE BE?



CARL SLIPS ON A ROSE AND COMES OUT OF HIS TENT... OUT INTO THE WHISPERS, SIGHING, GASPING WIND

VOICES? COMING FROM
BEYOND THE NEW ANIMAL
TRAINER'S TENT...

HIS VOICE... AND
MARTA'S?



CARL MOVES THROUGH THE MOON-
LIT NIGHT, HIS EYES BURNING LIKE
HOT COALS... LISTENING...

...AND AT THE END OF
THE MONTH WHEN I GET
MY CHECK, WE WILL
LEAVE... FOR AND
I... TOGETHER...

OH,
YES...
YES...



...LISTENING TO THE LASERWREN IN
HIS WIFE'S VOICE, THE FISSION, THE
RINGER...

BUT LET'S NOT
TALK ANYMORE,
ERIC, DARLING.
HOLD ME... CLOSE...

SWEET
MARTA...



...AND THEN, SLOWLY, HE RETURNS
TO HIS TENT ONCE MORE. HE HAS
HEARD ENOUGH...

SHE... SHE HAS FALLEN
IN LOVE WITH HIM. SHE
IS LEAVING ME. SHE...
I... I MUST STOP HER!

BUT,
NOW...



THE MOONLIGHT STREAMS THROUGH THE OPEN TENT-
FLAP... FALLING ACROSS THE PRINT... BLACK LETTERS ON
COLD WHITE... THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER...

WHAT'S THIS? "RODNEY DUBIN-
TERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD...
TORN TO PIECES AS IF ATTACKED
BY WILD BEAST!"



OF COURSE? "TORN TO PIECES BY WILDBEAST"
THAT'S HOW I CAN STOP HER FROM LEAVING.
THAT'S IT!



LATER, WHEN MARTA RETURNS FROM HER RENDEZVOUS, AND CRABLES BACK INTO BED, CARL PRETENDS HE IS ASLEEP.



ONLY AFTER MARTA HAS SLIPPED OFF INTO DEEP SLEEPER, DOES CARL STIR... AND RISE... AND SO OUT OF THE TENT.



... AND CROSSES DIRECTLY TO THE NEW ANIMAL TRAINER'S TENT WITH GUN IN HAND.



WHO? WHO'S THERE? WHO.

SET UP! AND DON'T MAKE A SOUND!

ERIC STUMBLER TO HIS FEET...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, CARL? PUT DOWN THAT GUN.

SO YOU WERE GOING TO RUN OFF WITH MY WIFE, OH, ERIC? WELL, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT! MOVE!



CARL MOTIONS ERIC OUT OF THE TENT AND DOWN THE LONG SILENT MIDWAY TOWARD THE BIG TOP.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, CARL?

I, ERIC, I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING! YOUR LION WILL DO THE WORK!



THEY CROSS THE TANNARK FLOOR OF THE BIG TOP UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION CAGE. THE TANNY BEAST PAGES BACK AND FORTH HUNGERY.



MY LION??

YES, ERIC, I'M GOING TO PUT YOU IN THE CAGE WITH HIM... WITHOUT YOUR WHOP! WITHOUT ANYTHING... JUST YOU AND YOUR LION!

WITHOUT MY WHOP? I'D BE HELPLESS, PARALYZED... UNABLE TO DEFEND MYSELF! FOR GOD'S SAKE, CARL! HAVE PITY!

PITY IS AN EMOTION BELONGING TO THE PITIFUL ERIC. SET IN.



CARL SWINGS OPEN THE BARRIED DOOR AND PUSHES ERIC SCREAMING AND GOES SPRAWLING. THE LION SNARLS...



...AND THEN, THE CIRCUS SPONGES ECHO WITH THE BLOOD-CURLING SHRIEKS OF A MAN BEING TORN TO SHREDS BY THE RAZOR SHARP FANGS OF A BLOOD-THIRSTY BEAST...



ERIC'S ANGUISHED SHRIEKS AWAKEN MARTA AND SHE LOOKS AROUND INLUT.

CARL! WHAT WAS THAT?
CARL! CA.



CARL'S BED IS EMPTY! OUTSIDE THE TENT, FOOTSTEPS POUND UP THE HIGHWAY TOWARD THE BIG-ICE MARTA SLIPS ON A ROSE AND BURSTS FROM THE TENT...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON? DON'T KNOW! IT'S COMING FROM THE BIG-TOP!



SHE RUNS WITH THE REST OF THEM... UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION TRAINER'S CAGE.

GOOD LORD!

ERIC!
ERIC!



SHE SCREAMS HIS NAME TWICE, AND THEN SHE JUST STANDS THERE, WATCHING THE BEAST LICK AT THE BLASHED AND MURDERED BODY UNTIL SHE HAS TO TURN AWAY AS THE MASTER SWEEPS OVER HER...

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

THE CRAZY FOOL! HE MUST HAVE COME OUT HERE TO PRACTICE HIS ACT!

AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?

CRACK!



AND THEN, SICK, SHE RETURNS TO HER TENT AND SITS AND WAITS, CRYING, UNTIL CARL COMES IN WITH THAT EVIL GRIN ON HIS COLD IMPASSIVE FACE...

YOU DID IT, DIDN'T YOU? YOU KILLED HIM! YOU KNEW!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT THEY SAID, MARTA? THEY SAID HE MUST HAVE BEEN PRACTICING HIS ACT!



BUT THERE IS NO SOFT IN MARTA'S MIND AS TO HOW ERIC DIED. CARL'S BED WAS EMPTY WHEN ERIC'S CORPSE ARRIVED HER. THE SHEETS WERE GOLD.

"I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!"

"YOU WILL GET OVER IT, MARTA!"



THE NEXT DAY'S PERFORMANCE IS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF THE TRAGEDY. THE TENTS ARE LOWERED. THE CIRCUS PREPARES TO MOVE ON.

"LOOK OUT! CARL!"



IT HAPPENS SUDDENLY... WITHOUT WARNING. CARL IS HELPING WITH THE DISMANTLING OF THE BIG-TOP WHEN THE MAIN SUPPORT TOPPLES...

"GOOD LORD!"



THE HEAVY POLE CRASHES DOWNWARD UPON CARL, CRUSHING HIM BENEATH ITS MASSIVE WEIGHT.



AND WHEN THE HUGE SUPPORT IS LIFTED, CARL LIES DEADLY STILL. HIS GLAZED EYES STARE...



"HEL... HE'S DEAD?"

"TWO IN A ROW! THE CIRCUS IS JUNKED!"

"SOMEBODY GET HIS WIFE!"

MARTA IS SUMMONED. SHE STANDS IMPASSIVELY OVER HER HUSBAND'S BODY, SHEDDING NO TEARS, SHOWING NO SIGN OF EMOTION...



"IT... IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, MARTA! THE MAIN SUPPORT."

"HE... HE WILL HAVE TO BE BURIED BEFORE WE CAN GO ON!"

MARTA'S VOICE IS COLD... CALLOUS... AS SHE SAYS...



"SOMEBODY SEND FOR AN UNDERTAKER..."

MARTA LOOKS DOWN AT THE STILL FORM OF HER HUSBAND LYING ON THE TARBARE FLOOR. AND EVEN THOUGH SHE READS HIS THOUGHTS, SHE SHOWS NO SIGNS OF RECOGNITION...

MARTA! MARTA, I AM ALIVE! I'M NOT DEAD! MARTA! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE! TRY TO HEAR WHAT I AM THINKING! I'M PARALYZED, MARTA! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M PARALYZED! I CAN SEE! I CAN HEAR! I CAN'T MOVE!



AS THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS ASSISTANT LIFT POOR CARL INTO THE WICKER, MARTA MOVES FORWARD...

MARTA! PLEASE! SAVE ME! I'M ALIVE! MARTA! I'M ALIVE! PARALYZED! NOT DEAD! PARALYZED! MARTA! PLEASE...



OH, MARTA! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

YES, MA'AM!



PLEASE DON'T EMBALM HIM, BURY HIM AS HE IS. HE WOULD HAVE WANTED IT THAT WAY!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, MA'AM!

MARTA! MARTA, NOT!



MARTA LOOKS DOWN INTO PARALYZED EYES THAT CAN STILL SEE... WHISPERS INTO PARALYZED EARS THAT CAN STILL HEAR...

MARTA! OH, GOOD! MARTA...



AT THE FUNERAL, MARTA STANDS, HER FACE A GRANITE MASK, BEHIND THE YAWNING PIT BELOW CARL'S COFFIN...

YOU CAN STOP THIS, MARTA! THERE'S STILL TIME. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME. I KNOW IT! PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU! DON'T LET THEM BURY ME ALIVE!

LOWER THE COFFIN!



AND EVEN THOUGH THE SOIL IS SHOVELED DOWN UPON THE COFFIN, CARL'S FRANTIC THOUGHT NEVER STILL COME THROUGH TO HER... TO HER AND ONLY HER... TO MARTA, WHO TURNS AND WALKS AWAY DOWN THE PATH LEADING OUT OF THE CEMETERY...

MARTA! DON'T DO THIS! PLEASE! SAVE ME! PLEASE! OH, LORD... MAKE HER SAVE ME!



THE AFTERNOON WINDS? THE NIGHT BREEDS COMES UP, WHISPERING OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS. SIX FEET BELOW, IN HIS COFFIN, CARL GONCOTRATES AS THE PRECIOUS OXYGEN SLOWLY DISAPPEARS.

MARTA? COME BACK! COME SAVE ME!
I'LL DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING! HAVE
PITY ON ME! HAVE PITY!



THE STARS COME OUT, WHITE PIN-POINTS IN A VELVET SHROUD. A FIGURE MOVED OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS.

I KNOW YOU ARE RECEIVING
MY THOUGHTS, MARTA! I KNOW.



A SHOVEL DIPS INTO THE SOFT EARTH.

MARTA?
MARTA,
YOU DID
COME! YOU
DID!



THE DIGGING CONTINUES, THE SHOVEL SCOOPING AWAY THE SOFT EARTH. FINALLY THE LID OF THE COFFIN SWINGS BACK.

MARTA! DARLING! I...
OH, LORD... YOU'RE
NOT MARTA!



AND THEN AS CARL LIES HELPLESS... PARALYZED... LIKE A LION-TAMER WITHOUT A WHIP... FEELING THE MAJOR SHARP TEETH RIPPING AND TEARING AT HIS FLESH... UNABLE TO SCREAM AT THE EXCRUCATING PAIN, HE THINKS OF THE NEWSPAPER LYING IN THE MOONLIGHT... THE NEWSPAPER THAT FIRST GAVE HIM THE IDEA OF HOW TO KILL ERIC.

'BODIES DISINTERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD...
FOUN TO PIECES AS IF ATTACKED BY SOME
WILD BEAST!' OH, LORD! THEY WERE WRONG!
THIS IS NO BEAST! IT'S A GHOUL!



YEH, YEH? YEP, KIDDIES! CARL
ENDED UP JUST LIKE ERIC...
BEING TORN TO BITS AND
UNABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF.
AS FOR MARTA... SHE READ CARL'S
FINAL THOUGHTS, AND GOT
QUITE A MENIAL PICTURE
OF WHAT WAS GOING ON! JUST
ONE MORE THOUGHT ON THIS
WHOLE SUBJECT AS THE BOP

CEMETERY FORT-
MAN KEEPS TELLING
HIS MOON CREWS,
'ONE THAT CAN GET
GRAVES'
WELL, YIK
AMRITS, SO...
'WYE, NOW!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELCOME! SALUTATIONS, SLIME SAVOYERS!! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN NOWHES, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU IN C.K.'S MAD WITH A FAVORITE TELL-TALE FROM MY CREEP-COLLECTION. SO HAVE THE SIGARETTE READY AND I'LL UPSET YOUR STOMACH WITH THE TUMMY-TURNER I CALL...

PEARLY TO DEAD

OUR STORY BEGINS DURING WORLD WAR II, WHEN THE UNITED STATES MARINES WERE SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY INCHING ACROSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, INCHING AND BATTLING FOR EACH BLOODY ATOLL, EACH JAPANESE-IMPOSED CORAL ROCK. ONE HOT BLACK STARLESS NIGHT, A SMALL BOAT MOVED SILENTLY TOWARD THE CORAL REEF THAT RIMMED THE PEACEFUL LAGOON OF ONE OF THESE JAPANESE-HELD ISLANDS. INSIDE, TWO MEN CROUCHED QUIETLY, STUDYING THE DANCING FIRES ON THE SHORE ACROSS THE PLACID LAGOON...

BETTER DROP THE ANCHOR, PHIL. THIS IS ABOUT AS CLOSE IN AS WE CAN GET WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

RIGHT, LARRY.



THE ANCHOR RAN OVER THE SMALL BOAT'S SIDE AND DROPPED WITH A BUZZLED SPLASH INTO THE BLACK PACIFIC. THEN, STRANGLY, THE TWO MEN BEGAN TO UNDOSS...

WHILE I'M CLEARING THE STEEL NETTING, YOU START SETTING THE DEMOLITION CHARGES, PHIL.

CHECK?



THEY STOOD ALMOST NAKED IN THE PACIFIC NIGHT, MUSCLES RIMMING. THEY BENT AND SLID THE WEIRDLY SHAPED BLACK RUBBER FLIPPERS ONTO THEIR FEET... PULLED THEIR RUBBER MASKS WITH THE ROUND GLASS WINDOWS OVER THEIR FACES...



READY? GOT THE CHARGES... JIMERS... FUSES?

RIGHT? GOT YOUR WIRE CLIPPERS... UNDERWATER LAMP... JACK-SAM?

SILENTLY, THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY'S UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... THE FABULOUS PROSWEN... SLID OVER THE SIDE OF THEIR SMALL BOAT AND INTO THE CHOPPY PACIFIC...



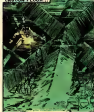
WELL, TAKE IT EASY, PHIL!

SEE YOU IN A WHILE, LARRY!

...AND WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS. ...THE BUSINESS OF CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE INVASION OF THE FOLLOWING MORNING. THE ONE NAMED LARRY SLID DOWNWARD, FLICKING ON HIS LAMP, SEARCHING OUT THE TREACHEROUS PROPELLER SHATTERING STEEL NETTING...



...AS THE OTHER, THE ONE NAMED PHIL, SKIMMED BELOW THE SURFACE TO THE PILING BUNK IN THE LAGOON FLOOR...



WITH THE NETTING CLIPPED AND SAVED AND CUT AWAY AND RENDERED HARMLESS, LARRY SHOT TOWARDS PHIL TO HELP PLACE THE DEMOLITION CHARGES, HIS LANTERN BEAM RUNNING ACROSS THE SANDY BOTTOM OF THE LAGOON...



AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE SAW IT... STRETCHING AWAY BELOW HIM IN THE GLOOMY MURKY DARKNESS... THE CYCLES BED...



AS LARRY CIRCLED OVER THE BED, STUDYING THE ABNORMALLY-LARGE SHELLED SEA CREATURES WITH THEIR PRICELESS-GLOBED GEMS IMBEDDED IN THEIR QUIVERING MEATY BODIES, PHIL SLID TOWARD HIM, STARING WIDE-EYED.



THE TWO MEN SURFACED BESIDE THEIR BOAT, GASPING FOR BREATH...



DID YOU SEE IT, PHIL? THERE, BARR... THERE MUST BE A FORTUNE IN PEARLS IN THAT OYSTER BOAT I'M COME BACK... BARR... DOWN...

DON'T BE A FOOL, LARRY! I'VE SET THE CHARGES. C'MON! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

MOMENTS LATER, THE SMALL BOAT WAS HUNTING SEAWARD. BEHIND, THE DEMOLITION CHARGES EXPLODED IN THE PLACID LAGOON SIGNALING THE NIGHTY BATTLE RAGONS OFFSHORE TO BEGIN THEIR BARRAGE. LARRY SWORE AGAIN THE DIN...



WE'LL COME BACK, PHIL! AFTER THIS CRAZY MISS IS OVER, WE'LL COME BACK FOR THOSE PEARLS. WE'LL BE BACK!

SURE, LARRY! SURE...

AT DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, THE ASSAULT BOATS STORMED THE QUIET LAGOON, AND PROPELLERS TURNED BLOOD INTO THE WATERS ABOVE THE OYSTER BED...



THE BEACHHEAD WAS SECURED. THE DEMOLITION TEAM'S WORK WAS DONE. LARRY AND PHIL WERE SHIPPED ELSEWHERE TO OTHER ISLANDS, WITH OTHER LAGOONS...



THEY SAY THIS ATOM BOMB WIPED OUT A WHOLE CITY, PHIL. WARE THE JAP'LL SURRENDER NOW THEN...

C'MON! STOP DREAMIN' ABOUT THOSE PEARLS! NOW GET READY!

V-J DAY! PEACE! IT CAME SOO-DEMY... AFTER THE SECOND A-BOMB WAS DROPPED, THE JAPANESE SIGNED AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER, AND THE WAR WAS OVER...



HEY, PHIL! SHIPPING ORDERS? WE'RE GOING HOME! WE'RE GETTING OUT!

LET'S SEE...

SAN FRANCISCO'S GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE CAME UP OUT OF THE MIST ONE MORNING. THE TROOPSHIP SLIPPED BENEATH IT AND HOBLED IN TOWARDS A PIER WHERE BANDS PLAYED AND CHILDREN CHEERED AND WOMEN BOBBED HAPPILY.



LOOK, PHIL! THERE'S GLADYS!

GLADYS? WHERE?

THEY CAME DOWN THE GANGPLANK TOGETHER, SIDE BY SIDE, LARRY AND PHIL. BUT THE GIRL THAT WAITED WITH TEAR-STAINED CHEEKS HAD EYES FOR ONLY ONE OF THEM



PHIL, D'ARLING...

GLADYS—BABY...

HEY... WHERE DOES AN ALIEN GO TO REGISTER?

LARRY TRIED TO HIDE THE JEALOUS ANGER... THE HURT THAT HE FELT. GLADY'S PREFERENCE HAD COME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO HIM...

"I... I WANTED TO TELL YOU, LARRY! BUT... WELL... I..."

"I UNDERSTAND, GLADY."

PHIL HAD WON AGAIN. IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT... EVER SINCE THEIR COLLEGE DAYS. THEY'D BOTH COME OUT FOR THE SWIM TEAM...

"THAT'S GOOD TIME, SON! EN... WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS?"

"LARRY! LARRY MILES!"

LARRY'D DONE HIS BEST, BUT PHIL... PHIL HAD DONE JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER.

"CONGRATULATE A TONN, BOY! THAT BEATS MILES'S TIME BY EIGHT FEET!"

"THE NAME'S PHIL CANNON, COACH!"

LARRY AND PHIL HAD BECOME FAST FRIENDS IN COLLEGE, BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS THAT RIVALRY BETWEEN THEM...

"COME ON, LARRY!"

"LET'S GO, PHIL!"

"MILES IS GREAT, AND CANNON IS BETTER. WE'VE BOTH WON SWIM TEAM THIS YEAR."

...NOT ONLY IN THE POOL... BUT ALSO ON THE CAMPUS.

"HEY, YOU TWO! I WANT YOU TO MEET GLADY HARDY! GLADY, MEET OUR TWO SWIM CHAMPS, LARRY MILES AND PHIL CANNON."

"HI! VERY NICE! ARE YOU BUSY TONIGHT, MISS HARDY?"

"SORRY, LARRY! MISS HARDY ALREADY HAS A DATE WITH ME!"

When GLADY'S HAD COME INTO THEIR LIVES, THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO BOYS HAD INCREASED. THEY'D BOTH FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER...

"GLADY, YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU! SAY 'YES'! AND I'LL BUY YOU THE BIGGEST ENGAGEMENT RING IN THE STORE..."

"LARRY! I... I LIKE YOU... BUT... WELL, I JUST CAN'T TAKE UP MY MIND!"

THEN, PEARL HARBOR, AND THE U.S. WAS IN A WAR. THE NAVY HAD COME TO LARRY AND PHIL... ASKED THEM TO JOIN THE UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... AND THEY'D ACCEPTED...

"TO LONG, BABY!"

"BYE!"

"I WILL! GOOD-BYE, BOYS! TAKE CARE!"

AND NOW THEY WERE BACK FROM THE WAR, STANDING ON A JAMMED PIER FULL OF RETURNED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS AND HAPPY LOVED ONES, AND PHIL HAD WON AGAIN...



WE'RE... WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED, LARRY!

WAZZ, PHIL? I MEAN, WHAT ABOUT OUR BUSINESS OUT THERE... IN THE PACIFIC?

IT'LL BE A LONELY PLACE TO TAKE GLAZYS ON OUR HONEYMOON, I AMRY.



OH, SURE! SURE! WELL, CONGRATULATIONS, YOU TWO!

DISCHARGE! CIVILIAN CLOTHES AGAIN! FREEDOM FROM REGIMENTATION... DISCIPLINE! THEY WERE ALL LARRY'S NOW. AND A SECRET, JOO! A MILLION DOLLAR SECRET! JUST ONE THING... ONE THING WASN'T BETTER! GLAZYS!



I PICKED UP THREE SURPLUS FLIPPERS AND WAZZ, PHIL, I THOUGHT WE'D TRY THEM OUT TONIGHT.

LOOK, FELLER! I'M GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW! HAVE A HEART!

LARRY CONVINCED PHIL THAT AFTER HE WAS MARRIED THERE'D BE NO CHANCE TO TRY OUT THEIR EQUIPMENT, AND PHIL RELUCTANTLY AGREED. THEY DROVE OUT TO A LONELY BEACH...



I PICKED THIS SPOT BECAUSE IT'S SO MUCH LIKE THAT LAROCK, PHIL!

YEAH! IT... IT IS! WELL! LET'S GO!

LARRY HAD PLANNED IT ALL SO CAREFULLY! WITH PHIL DEAD, GLAZYS... THE SECRET OF THE PEARLS... EVERYTHING... WOULD BE HIS...



LARRY! WHAT THE...? OWNERS!

IT'S GOING TO BE SUCH A FINE PHIL... A GOOD SWIMMER LIKE YOU... DROWNING!

THEY STRUGGLED WILDLY, THERE IN THE FOAMING SURF OF THAT LONELY CALIFORNIA BEACH. LARRY HELD PHIL'S THROAT IN A VICE-LIKE GRASP, UNTIL PHIL'S BODY WENT LIMF AND LIFE LEFT IT AND IT SLIPPED FROM LARRY'S GRASP AND DANK BENEATH THE OCEAN WAVES...



AND LARRY CAME OUT OF THE WATER ALONE WITH A GRIM SMILE ON HIS FACE AND THE STORY HE'D TELL GLAZYS SO CLEAR IN HIS MIND...



GLADYS LISTENED TO LARRY AS HE SOBBED OUT THE STORY OF HOW THEY'D GONE SWIMMING...HE AND PHIL...AND PHIL'D GONE DOWN...AND

...AND BEFORE I COULD GET TO HIM, HE WENT DOWN FOR GOOD. HE... HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN A CRAMP. I...I TRIED TO DIVE FOR HIM...BUT THE CREATOR!

NO? SON... NO... NO... LORD!



IT WOULD TAKE TIME LARRY DECIDED...TIME FOR GLADYS TO FORGET PHIL. IN THE MEANTIME, HE WOULD GO TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC...TO THE TINY ATOLL WITH ITS FABULOUS CYSTER BEES...AND MAKE HIS FORTUNE.

I'LL BE BACK IN THREE MONTHS, GLADYS. PERHAPS, BY THEN YOU WILL HAVE GOTTEN OVER THIS, AND MAYBE I, YOU AND I.

I'LL NEVER STOP LOVING HIM LARRY! SON! MEYER!



THE TRIP TO THE ATOLL WAS LONG, BUT LARRY DIDN'T MIND IT. ONCE ON BOARD, HE LOST NO TIME IN MAKING FRIENDS...

BABY, YOU'RE THE MOST GORGEOUS GULL ON THIS SHIP! I...I LOVE!

WELL... SO ON... DON'T JUST LEAVE ME HANGING!



WERE HIS EYES DECEIVING HIM? WAS THE FOAM AND THE SPARK AND THE CHURRING WATER BESIDE THE SHIP PLAYING TRICKS ON HIM, OR DID HE ACTUALLY SEE THE BLISTER WHITE BODY?



WHAT IS IT, LARRY?

IS THERE? IN THE WATER? I...I... NO? IT CAN'T BE! I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!

AND WAS THE FOUL ODOR OF THE SEA AND DECAY AND ROTTING FLESH THAT BEARED HIS NOSTRILS WHEN HE OPENED HIS CABIN DOOR THAT NIGHT JUST LARRY'S IMAGINATION?



CHUCK...

WAS IT A DREAM? OR DID LARRY ACTUALLY SEE THE WHITE PULPY FISH-FITTED FACE IN THE PORTHOLE THAT NIGHT WHEN HE'D BEEN STARTLED OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP?



HUH? WHO...WHO...GOOD LORD!

AND WAS IT THE SEA, OR DID HE ACTUALLY HEAR THAT LAUGHTER...THAT RIPPING BLOOD-CURDLING LAUGHTER COMING IN FROM THE MURKY FOS BEYOND THE SHIP THE NIGHT HE STROLLED THE DECK ALONE?



WHO...WHO'S OUT THERE?

THE SHIP DOCKED AT TARTI AND LARRY LOST NO TIME IN HIRING A PLANE TO TAKE HIM SOUTH TO THE ATOLL.



CAN YOU LAND THIS CRAFT IN A LAGOON?

I CAN DROP IT ON A GARD, MISTER!

ON THAT PLANE TRIP SOUTH... SWIMMING LOW OVER THE BLUE PACIFIC... WAS LARRY CRAZY... OR DID HE SEE IT AGAIN... THERE JUST BELOW HIM... THAT ASHER, PULPY, BLOATED FORM...



I'M AFRAID, MISTER CANNON, AIR SICK?

CHUCK... A LITTLE, I GUESS.

THE ATOLL CAME UP... A PEARL AGAINST A BLUE BATH SEA-LINING... GUARDING ITS OWN PEARL TREASURE. LARRY CAST HIS FEARS FROM HIS MIND WHEN HE SAW IT...



THE TINY SEAPLANE CAME DOWN GENTLY AND BAT BOOBING QUIETLY IN THE BLUE LAGOON AS LARRY UNPACKED HIS GEAR, REMOVED THE FLIPPERS AND THE RUBBER GLASS-WINDOWED MASK, AND BEGAN TO UNPACK.



YEP! WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU GOING TO DIVE FOR SOMETHING?

YEP! THERE'S AN OYSTER BED IN THIS LAGOON... WITH PEARLS THE SIZE OF FOUR FIST, AND I'M GOING TO GET ME A FEW

TINY FISH SCATTERED BEFORE HIM AS LARRY SHOT DOWNWARD. HE PASSED THE OLD RUSTED NETTHER... THE BURKEN ASSAULT BOATS... THE WATER-LOGGED BLASTED PILING. AND THEN HE SAW IT... THE OYSTER BED. HE SWAM TOWARD IT... EAGERLY...



LARRY WAS SO BUSY WRENCHING THE LARGEST OYSTER HE COULD FIND FROM THE SANDY BOTTOM THAT HE NEVER NOTICED THE PUTRID, SLIMY, WHITE FORM DRIFT TOWARD HIM. AND WHEN ITS BLOATED ARMS CLOSED AROUND HIS NECK, AND THE ROTTER FACE GRINNED AT HIM, IT WAS TOO LATE.



WH... CHUCK... BLURP...

HEH, HEH! YEP, SIDDIES! THAT'S MY TAPL. THE PLOP OF THE SEAPLANE WAITED AROUND FOR LARRY TO COME UP FOR SEVERAL HOURS. FINALLY, HE SHRUGGED, WENT THROUGH LARRY'S PANTS, EXTRACTED THE MONKEY FROM HIS WALLET, TORRSED THE REST OF LARRY'S GEAR INTO THE LAGOON, AND TOOK OFF AND YOU'LL TAKE OFF WHEN YOU RECEIVE YOUR KIT FROM THE E.C. RAN-ADDICT CLUB. NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO C.R. I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAIL THE VAULT OF HORROR! BYE! E.C. THAT IS!



THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! The every mail I'm getting lately! Nobody writes criticizing me anymore, nobody writes threatening letters! Now all I get is poetry, song titles, book titles, and pretentious looks like the whole country's gone crazy! Well, as Lincoln said, "To get to give the people what they want" (Lincoln said THAT—ed.) Yeah, JOE LINCOLN, he runs a defense movie outside of Omaha, Nebraska; Specializes in 3-D pictures. Only ones equipped with polaroid watchfields allowed. (Oh, huh! We thought you meant IRVING LINCOLN—and I IRVING LINCOLN? When does HE do? He goes around saying "You gotta give the people what they want"—ed.) Oh, HUH! So anyway, here are the latest additions to E.C.'s HORROR HIT PARADE, suggested by Bernie and Sunday Goshling of Spring Valley, New York; Bill Rosen and Joe Higgins of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Mike Larkin of Philly, P. State of Wisconsin, W.; Donald Kesselman of Chicago, Tony Egan and Gregory Rosenau of N. Y. C.; Donny Skanes of Ardmore, Pa.; Maurice Byron of Alexandria, Ind.; Dennis Bortolussi of Green Springs, Miss.; and Peggy DeMare and Lloyd Gelin of Detroit, Mich.

TERRY'S SCREAM (from SLIME-LIGHT)
BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES
AFTER THE MATE IS OVER
SEVEN BLOODLESS NIGHTS (MAKE ONE
VAMPIRE WEASE)
I BELIEVE (THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF
BLOOD THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS)
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW (WATCHING
THE BLOOD-DROPS FALL)
LYNN-BOATS ARE A-COMIN
WITH THESE GLANDS
THE SCREAM OF TORTURE
I'M WINCING WITH SPEARS IN MY THIGHS
RATTLE RHYM OF THE REPULSIVE
ON THE FAULTS AGAIN WITH YOU
ON THE TAINTED SIDE OF THE MEAT
SQUAWK YOU WERE HERE!
WHO'S GONY NOW?
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX
WITH MY HEAD WIDE OPEN I'M SCREAMING
WHEN YOU GORE HER TWO-LIPS
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROWN TO
IDA TASTES LIKE APPLE CIDER
THE GIRL THAT I SURV
SEND ME ONE DOZEN POSTS
TUNE IS GURRING OUT ALL OVER

And here are some more additions to our LIVED LITERATURE LIBRARY, sent along by Benny Crow of Dallas, Texas; Jimmy Teal of Knoxville, W. Va.; and Donny Mares of Springfield, Ill.

BOURNE FAMILY ROBINSON
WITHERING SIGHTS
NOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY
THE LASH OF THE MORGANS

THE GIRLAND OF GODS
GREAT EXPECTATIONS (last)
GREAT RECOGNITIONS
AGONY AND CLEOPATRA
ROMEO THE GHUOL WE EY
SORMA'S DOOM

And now for some MORRID MOVIES, produced by David Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine, and Sam Campbell and Amalia Alexander of Waynesville, N. C.

A STREETCAR NAMED MY SINE
TWE AFRICAN'S SLEEN
HIGH STROWN
MUNG BEES
CALL ME MAD MAN
THE GREATEST CHUCK ON EARTH
WRING SOLOMON'S SPINE
THE FARMER TALKS A LIFE

Next, PULSATING POGGONS, beamed in by Web Andrews of Melrose, Mass., and Willard Johnson of Jackson, Miss.

WATCHIT SQUAD
BLIND MATE
MENACE DAY
MARTIN SLAM
SCARY MOORE
RUG HOPE
DEAD SKELETON

Last, and probably least, some FETTERED POETRY

BANQUET

We had some friends in to dinner
Everything was perfectly swell
But mother spoiled the party
She simply didn't taste well

—Lee Ellen Gie
Brooklyn, N. Y.

AUCTION

Shocking, Dorkery, Dork.
His Head Bailed off the Neck

Now that the adjustments are over, watch out! Here comes the commercial E.C. FAN-ASPECT CLUB! Don't be a slacker! Join the club! Send in two bits and get your bits! Turn to the corner, and you'll discover the blank, crackle! SUBSCRIPTIONS! By the way, one a dollar for eight! THIRD ANNUAL TALE OF HORROR! The best for you from "El Seed" is a quarter we'll send you your order!

The address for ads, orders, and mail is

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 705, Dept. 60
125 Lafayette Street
N. Y. C. 10013



CHOICE!



The ground was soft and clinging as Farraday slipped out of the thick forest surrounding the prison wall. There was a heavy mist rising from the ground, and all around him he could hear the incessant clamor of the jungle. The long, dark foliage swished eerily in the hot night air... it would partially cover the sound of his feet moving through the oozy jungle lanes.

Farraday moved along stealthily, like a hunted animal, his plan of escape churning in his mind. If he could creep through the jungle into the miserable little seacoast town and hide in one of the grimy steamboats moored at the crumbling wharfs, in a week or so he'd probably be gone forever from this cursed tropical penal colony. The discomfort and pain of escaping through the jungle was nothing compared to the prospect of another five years in prison, Farraday thought to himself. He HAD to get away, at all cost, for he could never live through the prison sentence, anyway. The giant flies and vicious mosquitoes and stinging, blood-sucking spiders swarming over the camp by the millions would eat him alive long before he was ready for release!

Farraday paused momentarily, listening intently for a sound of alarm. Then he straightened up, ignoring the fact that his sweating hands were trembling with nervousness, and plunged on through the stifling undergrowth. They hadn't discovered yet that he was gone... every minute he could gain would help immeasurably in his getaway.

He was coming to clearer ground now: the earth was dry and sun-parched, the trees were spaced further apart and the grass was lower and less matted. He'd have to be careful here, for he could be spotted as he moved through the open valley. He crouched again and

moved slower, his body bent like an ape swinging along the jungle floor. About 50 yards he proceeded, then his heart almost stopped beating... a shrill whistle had sounded far back. His escape had been detected! In another moment the guards would be overrunning him and dragging him back so that insect-infested hell behind the towering stone walls!

Farraday knew his only chance was to dig a shallow grave and slip into it, praying that the darkness of the night would hide him. With a frenzy born of desperation he began to scoop up the earth at his feet; in a few moments he had cleared a patch large enough for his body. He dropped face-down into it without a second's hesitation.

Almost before he had drawn another breath he was aware of a clammy tangling spreading over his exposed flesh. It was pitch-black, but he knew without seeing what it was that was swarming over him: he had plunged headlong into a nest of white maggots! Already they were tearing at his skin, their stinging pincers probing his cheeks and jaw, sinuous lines writhing into his nostrils and mouth. His eyelids felt as if they had caught fire... but Farraday didn't move a muscle. Even as he felt the stabbing pain at his throat and realized that the skin of his chest, inside his shirt, was being torn loose, he could think of only one thing. He was in fiery agony, but if only he could stay here in this shallow trench, the guards would never find him! And as his mind reeled and his body twitched uncontrollably as his blood trickled from a thousand deadly wounds... he was soled by one thought: if the guards couldn't find him, he wouldn't have to endure the horrors of prison life again... wouldn't be assailed by giant flies and the savage spiders!



HEY, WASN'T THERE S'POSE T'BE A BIG BOWL GAME HERE TODAY, MELVIN? SO WHERE'S ALL THE PEOPLE? SO?

SO HAVEN'T YOU HEARD, IRVING? THE FIRST ISSUE OF E.C.'S NEW HUMOR MAG IS OUT. THE PEOPLE ARE ALL DOWN AT THE NEWSSTAND... BUYING **PANIC!**

YER, KIDDIES! E.C.'S NEW HUMOR MAG, **PANIC** IS ON SALE. SO RUSH DOWN TO YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND AND GET YOUR COPY. HOWEVER IF YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS ANY FOOTBALL GAMES... IF YOU WANT TO READ **PANIC** AND SIT IN THE BOWL AT THE SAME TIME... **SUBSCRIBE!** FILL OUT THE COUPON AND MAIL TO...

THE PANICKY EDITORS OF:
PANIC
ROOM 106
225 JEFFERSON ST.
N.Y.C., 12, N.Y.

PLEASE SEND ME THE NEXT 8 ISSUES OF **PANIC** FOR WHICH I ENCLOSE ONE DOLLAR (\$1.00)

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

HERE'S A BUBBLY LITTLE TALE OF
TITANIC TERROR! I CALL IT...

PRAIRIE SCHOONER



MILDRED JACKSON, FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR OF HER HOUSE AND SCREAMED WITH JOY. HE STOOD ON THE PAINT-STARVED FRONT PORCH, DRESSED RESPLENDENTLY IN HIS CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM, HIS FACE BRONZED FROM FORTY YEARS AT SEA. HIS EYES GLOD AND SCINTILLING, HIS MOUTH GRIN, HIS TWO SUIT CASES BEHIND HIM...

ISRA! ISRA! WHY DIDN'T YOU WRITE ME YOU WERE COMING TO VISIT? OH, ISRA. IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

HELLO, MILLY. GOT A PLACE FOR YOUR OLD SEA GOD BROTHER TO BUNK DOWN FOR A SPELL?



D. Engstrom

MILLY LED ISRA INTO THE PARLOR...

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR YOU HERE, ISRA. YOU KNOW THAT. HOW LONG WILL YOU STAY?

JUST A SPELL, MILLY! JUST TILL I DECIDE WHAT I'M GONNA DO NEXT. Y'SEE... THEY TOOK AWAY MY SHIP. THEY RETIRED ME.



RETIRED... OH, ISRA. I'M SO SORRY.

YEA, MY SAILIN' DAYS ARE OVER, MILLY. I'M A LAND-LUBBER NOW. WELL, WHERE DO I STOW MY BEAR?



THAT WAS HOW EZRA JACKSON CAME TO LIVE WITH HIS SISTER MILDRED. AT FIRST, MILLY WAS VERY HAPPY TO HAVE HIM. AFTER ALL, SHE WAS AN OLD MAID...AND EZRA WAS COMPANY, BUT AS TIME WENT ON, EZRA BEGAN TO DO STRANGE THINGS.



EZRA! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT THROUGH YOUR SPY-GLASS?

NOOT!

ONE NIGHT, MILLY WAS ROUSED OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP BY HEAVY PAINS SHAKING HER POWERILY...



WHA...WHAT'S WRONG, EZRA? WHAT IS IT?

GET UP, YOU LASS! SURE. YOU'RE LATE FOR YOUR WATCH, AND IF YOU EVER DO THIS AGAIN, I'LL HAVE YOU FARTOWN IN THE BAY.

IT WAS OBVIOUS TO POOR MILLY THAT HER ELDER BROTHER WAS ILL...MENTALLY ILL. THE SHOCK OF BEING RETIRED HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HIS MIND HAD SHAPPED. HE FANCIED HIMSELF AT SEA AGAIN...THE HOUSE, HIS SHIP...AND SHE, HIS CREW.



YOU CALL THIS CLEAN? I WANT THIS DECK SCURBED TILL I CAN SEE MY REFLECTION! UNDERSTAND?

YES, EZRA!



I SAID WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT WITH YOUR SPY-GLASS?

N-NOTHING, MILLY! I WAS JUST WATCHING THAT SHIP ON THE HORIZON!



SHIFFPST! EZRA! THIS IS KANSAS! THERE AREN'T ANY SHIPS ON THE HORIZON. THERE ISN'T ANY WATER...FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES!

FROM THAT NIGHT ON, MILLY WAS FORCED TO "STAND WATCH" SHE HAD TO MOVE THROUGH THE HALLS OF THE OLD HOUSE FROM TWO A.M. TO DAWN, CARRYING A LANTERN AND SHOUTING...



LOUDER, YOU BLITHERING IDIOT! LOUDER!

EVERY BELL AND ALL'S WELL!



DON'T "EZRA" ME! IT'S "YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON!" REMEMBER THAT! NOW, GET TO WORK, YOU BLISSY RAT!

Y-YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON.

MILLY HAD BEEN A SCHOOL TEACHER IN HER HOME-
TOWN. SHE'D WORKED HARD AND MANAGED TO SAVE A
SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY. SHE'D USED PART OF IT TO
BUY THE HOUSE SHE NOW LIVED IN. THE REST, SHE'D
INVESTED WISELY, AND SHE'D BEEN ABLE TO LIVE
COMFORTABLY. BUT WITH EZRA'S ARRIVAL, HER MEAGER
INCOME WAS NOT ENOUGH...



SO MILLY WAS FORCED TO EARN EXTRA MONEY TO
AUGMENT THE SMALL INCOME SHE DERIVED FROM HER
INVESTMENTS. SHE HAD TO TAKE IN WASHING...



EZRA STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE CELLAR
FLOOR, STARES ABOUT HIM WITH WIDE BEAMING
EYES...



EZRA CAME DOWN THE CELLAR STAIRS, SCREAMING...



MILLY WAS HELPLESS. SHE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE...
EXCEPT, PERHAPS, TO HAVE EZRA PUT AWAY. SO SHE
CALLED IN A CARPENTER... A PLUMBER...



EDRA STORMED ABOUT IN THE CELLAR, SHOUTING OUT HIS ORDERS...

RIP OUT THOSE WINDOWS, CLOSE 'EM UP, PUT UP FALSE WALLS. MARGONY PAMPELO WALLS. SET IN PORT HOLES, REAL PORT HOLES... THAT OPEN!

YES, MR. JACKSON.

CAPTAIN JACKSON? PUT OCEAN SCENES BEHIND THE PORT HOLES. HAND SHIP'S LANTERNS AROUND. PUT IN A BUNK, A GALLEY, A HEAD. MAKE EVERYTHING AUTHENTIC. THIS IS MY SHIP!

YES, CAPTAIN!



AND POOR MILLY WITHDREW HER LIFE'S SAVINGS FROM HER INVESTMENTS TO PAY FOR THE HOAGSHELL.

A, 100... 5,000 DOLLARS, WHERE YOU ARE, MR. GUNNER?

THANK YOU, MA'AM. I HOPE YOUR BROTHER IS HAPPY WITH THE JOB WE DID!



MILLY CAME "BELOW" CARRYING HER LAUNDRY BASKET FILLED WITH THE WASH SHE'D BEEN TAKING IN...

WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE WITH THAT?

I'VE GOT TO DO THE SHIP'S LAUNDRY, CAPTAIN. I'VE...



"BELOW" IN HIS SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON BELLOWED...

STAND BY TO CAST OFF. ENGINE ROOM, FULL SPEED ASTERN. ALL HANDS, MAN YOUR STATIONS... ON THE DOUBLE...



EDRA STRUCK OUT SAVAGELY...

YOU'LL DO THE LAUNDRY ON DECK, YOU SCULLION BEGGAR. GET OUT OF MY QUARTERS...

OWWWW...



WITH HER INVESTMENTS WIPED OUT AND THE INCOME FROM THEM GONE, MILLY HAD TO TAKE IN MORE WASH THAN SHE COULD HANDLE IN ORDER TO MEET EXPENSES. AND EIRA'S ANGER BECAME WORSE AND WORSE. . .

SCRUB OUT THAT HEAD, YOU FO'G'S-EZ BRUDGE!

Y-YES, CAPTAIN!

POOR MILLY WOULD ESCAPE, EVERY CHANCE SHE COULD GET, AND LOCK HERSELF IN THE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM IN ORDER TO DO THE WASH IN THE TUB. AND AS SHE SCRUBBED, SHE WOULD LISTEN TO EIRA'S RANTING AND RAVING.

EASE THE HELM! BYE 'ER MORE RUDDER! STEADY AS YOU GO! HARD APOFT! STEADY! STEADY! GO!

DOE...DOE...

ONE HOT SUMMER'S DAY, EIRA STOOD AT THE OPEN PORT HOLE, SHOUTING OUT AT THE SEA-SCAPE SCENE BEYOND. . .

ANDY! ANDY THERE! DRIP ANDY! HOLD FAST. STAND BY!

WHILE UPSTAIRS, DIRECTLY OVER-HEAD IN THE BATHROOM, MILLY PANTED OVER A LOAD OF WASH. . .

THE HOT WATER, RUNNING INTO THE TUB OVER THE SOAKING CLOTHES, SENT UP CLOUDS OF STEAM WHICH FILLED THE LOCKED BATHROOM.

SUDDENLY MILLY CLUTCHED AT THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN HER CHEST, TOPPLING OVER. . .

GASP...

AND AS HER HEART-PAILED AND HER LIFE FADED WITH IT, THE BOILING WATER OVERFLOWED THE TUB, POOLING ABOUT HER PROSTRATE BODY, SINKING THROUGH THE BATHROOM FLOOR. . .

IN HIS CELLAR SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON LISTENED AS THE WATER, LEAKING DOWN FROM THE OVERFLOWING BATHTUB ABOVE, FILLED THE SPACE BETWEEN THE FALSE MAHOGANY PANELED WALLS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE...

STORMY SEA TONIGHT! BATTEN DOWN THE MATCHES. WE'RE IN FOR A BLOW.



THE CELLAR FILLED WITH STEAM, CAPTAIN JACKSON STAGGERED TO THE PORT HOLES, SLAMMED THEM SHUT. THE PRESSURE OF THE WATER CRUMPLED THE PANELED WALLS...



ABANDON SHIP! WE'RE SINKING!

SLUDDENLY, THE WATER BEGAN TO POUR THROUGH THE OPEN PORT HOLES...



ALL HANDS! ALL HANDS! WE'RE TAKING ON WATER! MAN THE BULGE PUMPS. SECURE THE BULKHEADS...

SLOWLY THE WATER ROSE IN THE CELLAR, BOILING, BUBBLING, BUSTLING EDGAR'S AGED BODY, BUT HE STUBBORNLY STOOD FAST...



ABANDON SHIP! THE CAPTAIN MUST REMAIN...

UNTIL THE RISING HOT WATER REACHED HIS CHIN... HIS NECK... Poured INTO HIS MOUTH AND STERED HIS TONGUE... HIS THROAT... HIS LUNGS...



GLUG... GLUG...

HIS, HEST? YEP, KIDDER. THAT'S MY MURDER MARINE OFFERING. EZRA FINALLY EGGED UP... IN HOT WATER! THIS IS THE FIRST CASE ON RECORD BY THE WAY, OF A CAPTAIN GOING DOWN WITH HIS SHIP IN THE MIDDLE OF A KANSAS PRAIRIE... IN A CELLAR AND NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER WHO IS WAITING TO WIND UP MY REEL RAG! REMEMBER! IF YOU'RE A FAN, AND AN ADDICT. JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB. 'BYE, HOYT!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEY, HEY! AND NOW, IT'S MORROD-WEAL-TIME. WELCOME TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, CREEPS. THIS IS YOUR REVOLTING RESTAURATEUR, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO BLING SLIME...AND WIND UP LIKE MYOCH-MAH FOR THIS IDIOTIC ISSUE. CARE FOR SOME SEA FOOD? WELL, HERE'S A TASTY TERROR TID-BIT TO TURN YOUR STOMACH. I CALL THIS SLOP-SERVING...

HALF-BAKED!

CAULIN SUGAR STOOD IN THE SPOTLESS KITCHEN OF "THE SEA SNELL RESTAURANT" STARRING IN MOR-BID FASCINATION AT THE GULMING, BLUE-GREEN, SPINY-LEGGED CLAWED CREATURES THAT SCRATCHED DRILL AROUND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BUTTER TUB. CAUTIOUSLY, HE REACHED IN AND PULLED ONE OF THEM FROM THE TUB, HOLDING IT UP. HE LAUGHED RADIATICALLY...

YOU'RE HERE, YOU DISGUSTING THING. NOW, NOW! DON'T STRUGGLE! IT'S NO USE! HEH, HEH!

CAULIN REACHED FOR A KNIFE, REPLACED THE STRUGGLING LOBSTER, BELLY UP ON THE RUDE WOODEN KITCHEN TABLE AND GRINNED DOWN AT IT.

FIRST, WE SPLIT YOU OPEN... FROM HEAD TO TAIL... LIKE SO...



THE LOBSTER SQUIRMED. CALVIN FORCED THE KNIFE BLADE AGAINST ITS SOFT-SHELLED UNDERSIDE AND, WITH A SLIGHT SAWING MOTION, CRUNCHED IT THROUGH. THE LOBSTER, NOW PRACTICALLY SEVERED IN HALF, STILL WIGGLED ITS SPINY LEGS AND WAVED ITS HUGE CLAWS AWKWARDLY...



HEH, HEH. NOW I *KNOW* THAT I HAD SOME *SENSITIVE* INSTRUMENT SO THAT I COULD HEAR YOUR BLOOD-CURLING SQUEALS, LITTLE UGLY MONSTER

CALVIN MOVED THE THRASHING SPLIT LOBSTER ONTO A RACK AND DROD IT INTO THE STOVE, BELOW THE LICKING BLUE FLAMES OF THE BRUILLER...



AND NOW, WE *BROKE* YOU ALIVE. WE LISTEN TO YOU *HOES* AND POP UNTIL YOU TURN ORANGE-RED AND YOU STOP YOUR SQUEAMING.

CALVIN STARED INTO THE STOVE AT THE BRUILLING LOBSTER. HIS EYES BLINKED ALMOST MANICALLY AS HE WATCHED ITS STRUGGLING ABATE...



DEAD, ALREADY, BLAST IT!

CALVIN GRINNED...

I MUST LOWER THE FLAME SO THAT THE *BEST* ONE WILL DIE SLOWER!



BEHIND CALVIN, THE SEA BIRD RESTAURANT'S CHEF SHOOK HIS HEAD AS HE WATCHED HIS EMPLOYEE...



WHY DO YOU TAKE SUCH SADISTIC DELIGHT IN KILLING THOSE POOR LOBSTERS, MR. DUBAN?

I HAVE THEM, JOHN!

CALVIN'S FACE SPUN GRIM AS HE TURNED TO HIS CHEF...



I HATE UGLY AND HORRIBLE CREATURES! HORRIBLE CREATURES SHOULD DIE HORRIBLY!

A LOBSTER IS A LIVING THING, MR. DUBAN... NO LIVING THING SHOULD BE MADE TO SUFFER

A LOBSTER IS HORRIBLE... UGLY! IT DESERVES TO SUFFER, JOHN. ITS OWN UGLINESS MERITS AN UGLY DEATH...

PERHAPS... TO A LOBSTER... IT IS YOU WHO ARE UGLY, MR. DUBAN!



MEANWHILE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A FLEW MAILED UP THE BEACONST FROM THE SEA SHELL RESTAURANT, A FISHERMAN GUIDED HIS BOAT OVER THE TUBBING OCEAN SHELLS TO A CORAL FLOAT FROM WHICH FLEW A TATTERED FLAG.



THE LAST ONE. IF THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ONE, WE WILL HAVE NO MONEY FOR FOOD!

THE FISHERMAN PULLED UP BESIDE THE BOBBING MARKER AND PULLED IT INTO HIS SEA SKIFF. SLOWLY, TEDIOUSLY, HE HAULED IN THE DRIPPING LINE THAT WAS FASTENED TO THE CORAL FLOAT...



I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. ALL ALONG THE COAST, OTHER LOBSTER FISHERMEN ARE FINDING TWO, MAYBE THREE LOBSTERS IN EACH OF THEIR POTS. FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, I HAVE NOT FOUND ONE!

FINALLY, THE LOBSTER TRAP BURNED, AND THE FOUL SCENT OF THE FISH HEAD, PLACED WITHIN IT AS BAIT, BECAME THE FISHERMAN'S NOSTRILS...



EMPTY! ALL EMPTY! NOT ONE LOBSTER IN ANY OF MY POTS.

SADLY, THE FISHERMAN GUIDED HIS INBOARD BACK TO THE BEACH WHERE A WOMAN AND CHILD STOOD IN THE DOORWAY OF A WIND-SCARRED SHACK, WAITING...



WELL, AMBROSE? NOT A ONE, LUCKY! NOT ONE LOBSTER! I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT.

THE FISHERMAN ENTERED HIS DAUGHTER'S SHACK AND SAT DOWN WEARILY...



PERHAPS TOMORROW, TOMORROW, TOMORROW... WE HAVE SAID THAT FOR TWO WEEKS! AMBROSE...

THE CHILD BEGAN TO CRY...



POPPA... SON... I AM HUNGRY. I WILL MAKE THE BOY SOME FISH, AMBROSE.

FISH! THE BOY NEEDS MILK, LUCK. LOBSTERS COULD BUY HIM MILK. LOBSTERS BRING A GOOD PRICE, BUT I CANNOT CATCH THEM! MY POTS ARE EMPTY!

PERHAPS TOMORROW YOUR LUCK WILL CHANGE, AND YOUR POTS WILL BE FULL, AMBROSE.



THE SEASHELL RESTAURANT WAS NOTED FOR ITS BAKED LOBSTER. PEOPLE CAME FROM MILES AWAY TO FEAST ON THE SUCCULENT WHITE MEAT DIPPED IN BUTTER SAUCE. CALVIN TARGAN DID A THRIVING BUSINESS.

THE LOBSTER WAS ESPECIALLY FASTY TODAY, MR. DUBAN.

THANK YOU, MR. DUBAN. SOON EVENING, COME AGAIN.

AFTER CLOSING TIME THAT NIGHT, JOHN, THE CHEF, REMINDED CALVIN...

WE'RE BETTING LOW ON LOBSTERS, MR. DUBAN. IF WE HAVE A GOOD CROWD TOMORROW, WE'LL RUN OUT!

I'LL PICK SOME UP IN THE MORNING... ON THE WAY IN? GOOD-NIGHT, JOHN.

JOHN NODDED AND LEFT. CALVIN LISTENED AS THE CAR MOTOR BECKED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, THEN TURNED TO THE ALMOST EMPTY TUB...

HIDEOUS, DISGUSTING CREATURES!

AFTER A WHILE, CALVIN LEFT THE RESTAURANT. HE LOOKED UP CAREFULLY, BUT HE DID NOT GET INTO HIS CAR. INSTEAD, HE WALKED DOWN TO THE BEACH...

BLAST IT! THERE'S A MOON OUT TONIGHT. WELL, I'LL HAVE TO CRASH IT.

HE MOVED DOWN THE BEACH TO WHERE A SEA SHIRT WAS MOORED. UNTYING IT, CALVIN PUSHED THE CRAFT INTO THE COOCHING BREAKERS.

THE INBOARD MOTOR COUGHED AND SPITTERED, THEN BEGAN TO HUM EVERLY. CALVIN GUIDED THE SKIFF OUT INTO THE OPEN SEA...

A FEW MILES OUT, HE PULLED UP BESIDE A BOBBING MARKER FROM WHICH A TATTERED FLAG FLAPPED...



AMBROSE, THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN, PEEED THE FLOOR OF HIS DINGY SHACK. LUCY, HIS WIFE, WATCHED HIM WITH SAD EYES.



COME TO BED, AMBROSE. YOU MUST GET UP EARLY.

I AM NOT SLEEPING, LUCY. I AM THINKING ABOUT MY LOBSTER POTS.

AMBROSE STOPPED PEEING. HE LISTENED. FAR AWAY OVER THE BEAR OF THE GULF POUNDING THE HEAVY BEACH, AMBROSE HEARD A SOUND... A DULL HUMMING SOUND.



A SEA SKIFF... OUT THERE IN THE NIGHT. SO THAT'S IT?

WHAT IS IT, AMBROSE?

AMBROSE POINTED OUT TO SEA. OUT TO THE DISTANT TOWING SMELLS.

SOMEONE'S OUT THERE. THAT'S WHY MY LOBSTER POTS ARE ALWAYS EMPTY. SOMEONE IS STEALING MY LOBSTERS.

AMBROSE! WAIT!



AMBROSE WAS OUT OF THE DOOR OF HIS WEATHER BEATEN SHACK IN A FLASH.

AMBROSE! COME BACK!

I'LL GET HIM, LUCY! I'LL GET HIM!



FAR OUT ON THE MOONLIT WAVES, CALVIN DUGAN LIFTED A LOBSTER POT INTO HIS SEA SKIFF.

TWO BEAUTIFIES! THAT'S SEVENTEEN ALREADY AND I'VE ONLY RAISED HALF OF HIS TRAPS...



SUDDENLY CALVIN LOOKED UP. SCARCELY ONE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, ANOTHER SEA SKIFF GLIDED TOWARD HIM SILENTLY.



IT'S THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN. HE MUST HAVE ROWED OUT. THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T HEAR HIM! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

CALVIN STRUGGLED WITH HIS INBOARD, TRYING TO START IT. THE OTHER SEA SKIFF PULLED ALONGSIDE. THE FISHERMAN IN IT GLARED AT HIM WITH BURNING EYES.



SO? NO WONDER MR DUGAN HADN'T BOTHERED TO STOP BY LATELY TO SEE IF I WANT ANY LOBSTERS TO SELL. HE KNOWS!

KEEP AWAY! AMBROSE! KEEP AWAY! I WARN YOU!

AMBROSE SHARLED...

YOU ONLY THIEF!
YOU HIDEOUS MONSTER!
MY CHILD HAS GONE
WITHOUT MILK AND
MEAT AND CLOTHES
BECAUSE OF YOU!

I'LL PAY
YOU,
AMBROSE!
I'LL PAY...



AMBROSE SCREAMED

PAY ME!! REVERT!
I'M GOING TO REPORT
YOU TO THE POLICE.
THEY'LL THROW
YOU IN JAIL, WHERE
YOU BELONG!

DON'T BE
A FOOL,
AMBROSE!
I'LL PAY
YOU WELL
TO FORGET
THIS!



NO! I WON'T TAKE
YOUR MONEY! IT'S
JAIL FOR YOU!
JAIL...

YOU
FORCE
ME TO DO
THIS,
AMBROSE!



THE KNIFE BLADE IN CALVIN OUSAN'S
HAND
BLINDED IN THE MOONLIGHT...



NOW, I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU,
AMBROSE... TO KEEP YOU
FROM TALKING...

AMBROSE'S SHRIEK ECHOED ACROSS THE HEAVING WATER
AS CALVIN PLUNGED THE KNIFE INTO HIS WRITHING BODY
AGAIN AND AGAIN...



THEN, CALVIN LASHED AMBROSE INTO HIS SEASKIRT.



... AND CHOPPED A HOLE IN THE FLOORBOARDS, LETTING
THE SEA WATER IN...



SLOWLY, THE BOAT, WITH AMBROSE'S BODY, BANK BELOW THE TOSSENG OCEAN WAVES.



CALVIN STARTED HIS INBOARD AND GUIDED HIS SKIFF BACK TO THE BEACH...



...AND LOADED THE BUTTERTUB WITH THE STOLEN LOBSTERS INTO HIS CAR TRUNK.



HE'S STARTED HOME...ROARING DOWN THE COAST ROAD AT BREAKNECK SPEED...WHEN THE SLOW-DUT OCCURRED...



AS CALVIN'S LURCHING CAR SPUN OVER, THE STEERING WHEEL SHATTERED, RIPPING INTO HIS BODY...TEARING...FLASHING...



HE LAY THERE, FUMING, SQUIRMING, HIS BODY ALMOST SPLIT IN TWO, AS THE OVERTURNED CAR CAUGHT FIRE AND THE FLAMES LICKED AT HIM AND HE SCREAMED AND SHRIELED AND WAS BROILED ALIVE.



HIS, HEE! THAT'S MY STORY, KIDDER! CALVIN ENDED UP LIKE THE LOPSTERS HE'D BEEN STEALING. WHEN I CAME UPON HIS BURNING CAR, HE WAS JUST ABOUT GONE. I WAS SO MAD THERE WASN'T A DROP OF BUTTER SAUCE AROUND! AND TALKING ABOUT SAUCE, YOU'D BETTER HURRY UP AND JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB! REMEMBER, MEMBERSHIP IS LIMITED TO 152,000,000 PEOPLE. SO DON'T LOSE OUT! GET YOUR FULL-COLOR CERTIFICATE, YOUR ENGRAVED

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